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Rights, to have any value, must be concrete, not mere vague abstractions. The right to live, upon which the author insists, is valueless unless supplemented by a poor-law. Even the most convinced individualist would scarcely claim that the conditions and rate of relief, varying as they do in different systems, come under the category of natural rights. If natural rights are so vague that they must receive their contents from positive law, they clearly have little value as a means of defending the individual against the omnipotence of the state. Fortunately, more efficient protection is found in the national conscience, which prevents the misuse of national power.

To dissent from the opinion of an author is by no means to disparage his book. Had M. Michel not been himself an individualist, his history of the individualistic movement since the eighteenth century would have been less appreciative and sympathetic. As it is, he has given us a most admirable account of the development of opinion, bringing out the salient points of conflicting views with such lucidity as to compel the reader to take a position. If that position is adverse to his cause, it is not the author's fault.

RICHARD HUDSON.

*History of the Post-Office Packet Service, between the years 1793–1815.* Compiled from records, chiefly official. By ARTHUR H. NORWAY. (London and New York: Macmillan and Co. 1895. Pp. ix, 312.)

CONTRIBUTIONS to the history of traffic are neither numerous nor always thorough in workmanship. Postal histories seem entitled to special attention, considering that they deal with the quintessence of traffic, and derive their information, in the main, from official records. Even in our day postal affairs and passenger traffic are not wholly separated, the fast trains and the principal ocean steamers being generally engaged in the mail service, without the profits of which many of them would not be maintained. Postal histories, then, have general value or interest, and it is pleasant to add that after the good beginning made by Joyce we have valuable contributions to English postal history from Hyde, Baines, and now Norway. Joyce undertook to give the postal history of England from the earliest time to the era of Rowland Hill; Hyde told the story of the seventeenth century; Baines offered modern reminiscences; and Norway gives details on the English mail-packet service from 1793 to 1815. In England a packet means a mail-boat, in the United States a passenger-boat.

The subject chosen by Norway is interesting and difficult. The period was one of war and extraordinary confusion, England being engaged in her struggle for maritime supremacy and a certain preponderance in the affairs of Europe. The struggle was highly successful, and Norway tells of the part played by the packets. Down to 1815 these packets were armed, in theory for defence, in practice for attack when occasion offered. Inci-

dentially they engaged in smuggling ; but their main purpose was to carry information, official and commercial, with security and despatch, and to help in enlarging British influence, with all it implied. The details are hard to get at. The story of inland mails and mail-routes is not easily traced ; sea-mails offer greater difficulties in times of peace, and necessarily lose the character of regularity in times of war, when the enemy seeks first of all to capture the mail-boats with their freight of despatches, correspondence, passengers, and treasure, the latter being uniformly carried in mail-boats. It is safe to say that Norway has done his work well. Very few of his facts will be challenged. His style is simple and vigorous ; his pages breathe the salt air, and the many adventures he details should make his book attractive to readers not interested in mails and ocean routes. His illustrations indicate the revolution brought about by steam, and the Russell wagon shows how treasure and second-class passengers were carried early in this century between London and the principal packets. The change is profound, leading the author to say that "the packet service is dead" (p. 2). He describes a blind old man as "a not unfitting symbol of the decay which has fallen on the service" (p. 305).

If the author means that the great ocean mails are no longer carried in brigs and sloops, depending on the winds of heaven, he is right, and might have commented on the slow voyages made by the packets that should have been built for speed. If he means that we owe no debt to the age he discusses so well, there is room for dissent. The very routes of the ocean greyhounds were evolved in the age covered by Norway, and the principles under which the mail-contracts are let to these swift steamships are not essentially different from those of the contracts of a century ago. Take an obvious illustration. Norway mentions the origin of the service to Malta in 1806 (p. 178). Malta is one of the way-stations on the mail-route from London to Calcutta. The service to Corunna began in 1688, to Lisbon in 1705, to Gibraltar in 1727, to Malta soon after that point was taken by England. In those days the mail to India was carried round the Cape of Good Hope by the ships of the East India Company. The route to Malta fairly confronted England with the problem of a direct service to India, which was successfully met by Waghorn, and continues the most interesting mail-route under British control. In the period covered by Norway the English packet service was extended to Madeira, Brazil, and Guiana. These lines are mentioned as an incident, but were part of a great policy that contributed in no small degree to the British control of South American commerce. Indeed, it was in the struggles detailed by Norway that far-sighted men perceived the important principle that commerce is apt to follow the mails, and that a violation of this principle is fraught with mischief.

Norway's book is altogether too important not to be considered a valuable contribution to postal history. In its way it is final. But there is room for larger views. After all, the period from 1793 to 1815 was one of transition, and a full history of English mail-packets will tell us what

the age contributed to the enduring possessions of postal science. It will appear, perhaps, that Norway has not described the service "in its prime" (p. 303), but rather in its victorious transition from youth and youthful deeds to the maturity of manhood. The packet service of England had its prime in the days of William III. and Queen Anne. Its growth under the early Georges was not equal to the requirements of the empire. The struggle against Napoleon and for supremacy brought out the full resources of England, and its postal needs on land and sea were met as they arose. In sea-mails and everything implied it was the age described by Norway that gave England her supremacy, which foreign nations have envied but not effectually challenged.

C. W. ERNST.

*Democracy and Liberty.* By WILLIAM EDWARD HARTPOLE LECKY.

(New York, London, and Bombay: Longmans, Green and Co.  
1896. Two vols., pp. xxi, 568; xix, 602.)

It is impossible in a review of ordinary length to give a complete idea, much less a thorough criticism, of a book that touches on so many aspects of politics and treats of so many problems in public life, as this last work by Mr. Lecky. It is necessary, therefore, to confine oneself to some of the more salient points which it presents. The first volume begins with a discussion of modern political institutions, and its dominant note is the decline of parliamentary government, attributed by the author to the wide extension of the suffrage, and to an entire abandonment of the connection between taxation and representation which was formerly the cardinal principle of the English government. Mr. Lecky is struck by the inefficiency of representative bodies in all countries, and he draws a picture of the political corruption in the United States, which, if somewhat highly colored, contains unfortunately far too much truth. Like many conservative Englishmen, however, he feels—and all the more keenly for his distrust of representative bodies—the great importance of the restraint on legislation furnished by the power of the American courts to hold statutes unconstitutional. It is certainly a striking fact that the Americans, among whom democracy on an extensive scale has been established longer than among any other people, should have been the first to learn to put their representatives under guardianship. The constitutions of many of the states are getting more and more elaborate, are limiting to a greater and greater extent the competence of the legislatures; and it is no less noticeable that within the last ten years there has been a decided increase in the readiness of the courts to hold statutes invalid on constitutional grounds. Curiously enough, this is quite as marked in the states where the judiciary is elective as it is in those where it is appointed. Nor does it seem to arouse any general disapprobation. Étienne Lamy has remarked that the great art in politics consists not in hearing those who speak, but in hearing those who are silent; and it is probable that if in America we could ascer-